

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ROME 00237 051851Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----077166 060230Z /72
R 051825Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9672

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 0237

EXDIS

FROM VATICAN OFFICE

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PGOV, IT, VT
SUBJECT: VATICAN VIEWS ON CURRENT ITALIAN POLITICAL SCENE

1. VATICAN SUBSTITUTE SECRETARY OF STATE CAPRIO TOLD US TODAY THAT THE VATICAN IS SERIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE CURRENT ITALIAN POLITICAL DEBATE AND THAT IT HAS TAKEN STEPS TO INFORM ALL THE RESPONSIBLE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC LEADERS THAT THE ITALIAN CHURCH IS STRONGLY OPPOSED TO HAVING THE COMMUNIST PARTY IN THE GOVERNMENT. TO MAKE SURE THAT THEY UNDERSTOOD THE CHURCH'S POSITION THEY HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT IF THEY PERMIT PCI ENTRY IN THE GOVERNMENT, IN FUTURE ELECTIONS THE DC SHOULD EXPECT, "AT MAXIMUM, THE CHURCH'S SILENCE."

2. CAPRIO ALSO STATED THAT VATICAN FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND THE PREDISPOSITION OF SOME IN DC TO SEEK POLITICAL COMPROMISES WITH THE PCI OUT OF FEAR OF EARLY ELECTIONS. ALL PUBLIC SIGNALS--THE RECENT SCHOOL ELECTIONS, PUBLIC OPINION POLLS AND THE "OVERWHELMINGLY NEGATIVE REACTION" TO ZACCAGNINI'S TELEVISION STATEMENT THAT THE GOVERNING FORMULA MAY NEED ADJUSTMENT--INDICATE THAT IF ELECTIONS WERE HELD, THE DC WOULD GAIN VOTES.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ROME 00237 051851Z

3. HE THOUGHT THAT THE MAJOR UNPREDICTABLE--AND THUS DESTABILIZING--ELEMENT IN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES IS THAT KEY CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (HE MENTIONED ZACCAGNINI, MORO, FANFANI, "AND EVEN ANDREOTTI") WISHED TO BECOME PRESIDENT OF ITALY. HE THOUGHT, HOWEVER, THAT THEY AND OTHERS REALIZE THAT AGREEING TO THE "HISTORIC COMPROMISE" WOULD AMOUNT TO A DEFEAT OF THE ITALIAN CHURCH AND THE DC ON A PRINCIPLE ON WHICH THEY HAD TAKEN

A STRONG PUBLIC STAND.

4. COMMENT: THE VATICAN'S CONCERN ABOUT ITALIAN CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS AND ESPECIALLY WITH THE POLITICAL DEBATE OVER THE QUESTION OF PCI ENTRY INTO THE PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY OR THE GOVERNMENT IS BEGINNING TO SURFACE IN THE PAGES OF L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO. IN THE POLITICAL ANALYSIS COLUMN OF JANUARY 5, THE VATICAN ORGAN WRITES: "THE DC CONTINUES TO AFFIRM THAT NOT ONLY THE POSSIBILITY, BUT EVEN THE IDEA OF AN EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT... SHOULD, BY ALL MEANS, BE REJECTED....THE DC STANDS FIRM ON THIS PRINCIPLE AND AT THE MOMENT IN WHICH IT REAFFIRMS ITS DECISIVE "NO" TO THE PCI IN THE MAJORITY AND THE GOVERNMENT, THE DC SUGGESTS ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS WHICH...SHOULD PRUDENTLY EXAMINED BEFORE BEING REJECTED APRIORI." END COMMENT.

5. WE ALSO ASKED CAPRIO WHETHER A RECENT ARTICLE IN THE VATICAN ORGAN L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO ENTITLED "THE IDEOLOGIZING OF THE PCI" REPRESENTED A VATICAN RE-EVALUATION OF BERLINGUER'S LETTER TO THE BISHOP OF IVREA (ROME 17016). HE SAID THAT IT WAS WRITTEN BY A COMPETENT UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR AND THAT IT REPRESENTED THE POSITION OF THE CHURCH AND THE VATICAN. THE ARTICLE BEGINS WITH A QUOTATION FROM THE NOVEMBER 26, 1977 DECLARATION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE WHICH UNDERLINED "THE THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IRRECONCILABILITY BETWEEN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH AND MARXISM" AND DECLARED THAT "TOWARDS MOVEMENTS WHICH REMAIN SUBSTANTIALLY LINKED TO IDEOLOGIES

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ROME 00237 051851Z

INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE BIBLE" IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO MODIFY THE ATTITUDE OF THE CHRISTIANS. IT ENDS, AFTER AN ANALYSIS OF THE IDEOLOGICAL POSITION OF THE PCI, WITH THE FOLLOWING CONCLUSION: "THE AFFIRMATION OF THE NON-IDEOLOGICAL CHARACTER OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF ITALY, MADE WITH MUCH FANFARE BY BERLINGUER, CANNOT MODIFY, IN SUBSTANCE, THE POSITION OF BELIEVERS AND DEMOCRATS TOWARDS THE PCI." GARDNER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978ROME00237
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780009-0569
Format: TEL
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780196/aaaaddec.tel
Line Count: 101
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 8ace8be6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3824141
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VATICAN VIEWS ON CURRENT ITALIAN POLITICAL SCENE
TAGS: PGOV, IT, VT
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/8ace8be6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014